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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000883

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DEPT FOR SCA/INS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PARTIES STRESS APRIL 6-9 GENERAL STRIKE WILL BE
PEACEFUL

REF: A. KATHMANDU 819

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 829

[1](#)C. KATHMANDU 762

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In separate meetings with the Ambassador on March 30, United Marxist Leninist Party (UML) Acting General Secretary Amrit K. Bohara and Nepali Congress (Democratic) Party (NC(D)) Acting President Gopal Man Shrestha both stressed that the upcoming April 6-9 general strike (bandh) called by the seven-party alliance would be peaceful. While the Maoists "morally supported" the action, the Maoist leaders had promised the Parties they would not interfere. Bohara explained that the UML could not join with the Maoists until the Maoists gave up violence. Shrestha commented that if the King reached out to the Parties, they could leverage that positive action to force the Maoists to change also. He highlighted the danger to the monarchy if the King failed to reach out. Shrestha also noted that the NC(D) supported the UML's call for the Maoists to declare a cease-fire (ref A), explaining that peaceful Party mass gatherings would be easier to organize during a cease-fire. End Summary.

April 6-9 General Strike Peaceful

[1](#)2. (C) On March 30, United Marxist Leninist (UML) Acting General Secretary Amrit K. Bohara and Nepali Congress (Democratic) Acting President Gopal Man Shrestha, in separate meetings with the Ambassador, both stressed that the upcoming April 6-9 nationwide general strike/closure (bandh) called by the seven-party alliance would be peaceful. (Note: There continues to be some confusion whether the Maoists or the seven-party alliance called the April 6-9 bandh (ref B). In any event, it is currently perceived as a seven-party action. End noteQ Both Bohara and Shrestha explained that the Maoists had given their "moral support" but had promised not to interfere in the Parties "independent" peaceful action April 6-9. Restating that the Parties were against violence, both noted that if the government had specific knowledge of Maoists in Kathmandu planning violence, as Home Minister

Kamal Thapa had publicly stated, then the government should act against those Maoists, and not against the Parties who were advocating only peaceful action. Bohara thanked the U.S., noting that without international support, all party leaders would already be in jail. He stressed that this was a time of uncertainty, as "no one knows who the government will arrest tomorrow." However, Bohara stated, "we will not run away or go underground because we are a peaceful movement." Shrestha also stressed that the Parties' actions would be peaceful, but admitted he was "afraid" that government supporters and security people in civilian dress would disturb the Party gathering and turn it violent.

UML: No Joint Action with Maoists

¶3. (C) Bohara stressed that the UML could not have joint action with the Maoists until the Maoists renounced violence. He commented, "we are 100 percent against violence." Bohara acknowledged that the Maoists had killed party cadre, and that they continued to kidnap, extort and torture people in villages. "In spite of that, as a responsible party, we realize we cannot solve the Maoist crisis by military means, so we need political dialogue," he continued. He noted that the 12-point understanding, and the March 19 restatement of the understanding (ref C), was the Parties' way to bring Maoists into the mainstream. He admitted that the UML was suspicious of Maoist intentions, but explained that the Parties wanted both to pressure the Maoists to change, and to give them the opportunity to do so.

Parties Could Leverage King Reaching Out

¶4. (C) Bohara and Shrestha both acknowledged that the Maoists and Parties were competing, trying to pull each other to their own agenda. With the 12-point understanding the Parties and the Maoists had agreed on the goal of a constituent assembly, but they still did not agree on the method to achieve that goal. Explaining that the Parties would be more successful pulling the Maoists to their agenda if the King reached out to the Parties, Bohara stated, "We could say to the Maoists that the King has changed and now you must change, too." Bohara commented that Maoist leadership had given arms to cadre, but had not worked to build a political culture. He explained that public opinion and moral pressure for political dialogue would give the Maoists a chance to see that their methodology was wrong, and that they needed to build political cadre to allow them to come into the political mainstream and thus achieve a "safe-landing."

Danger to Monarchy if King Fails To Act

¶5. (C) Shrestha worried that if the King continued on his roadmap, including announcing Parliamentary elections as widely expected in his New Year's message on April 14, then there would not be a good future for the monarchy. He noted that, if the King reached out, the Parties would take the responsibility to ensure a role for the monarchy in their dialogue with the Maoists. He stressed that the NC(D) was a democratic party, and supported a constitutional monarchy, not a republic. However, he cautioned that the King had to want to be a ceremonial King. Shrestha noted that the Maoists, in the 12-point understanding, had agreed that, if the people through a constituent assembly supported a ceremonial King, then the Maoists would not object and would abandon their call for a republic.

NC (D) Urging Maoist Cease-fire

¶6. (C) Shrestha explained that the NC(D) supported the UML's call for the Maoists to enact a unilateral cease-fire. However, the smaller, more left-leaning parties in the alliance believed that a cease-fire equaled supporting the King. Shrestha noted that the bigger parties could more

easily request a cease-fire from the Maoists, explaining that it was needed for peaceful agitation against the King. Shrestha explained that the Parties had only postponed calls for a mass gathering in Kathmandu, which had been set for April 8, but would now be impossible due to the April 6-9 general strike. The mass gathering would occur late in April, Shrestha asserted. If the Maoists called another cease-fire, then the Parties would have more chance for a successful mass rally in the capital.

Maoist Violence Continues

17. (U) Despite a pledge not to disrupt the nationwide government sponsored school leaving certificate exams, Maoists bombed a test center full of 204 students in far-west Dailekh District on March 31, injuring dozens of students. The action drew broad criticism in the local media. In the mid-west Banke District on April 2, Maoists beat up dozens of locals, including women and children, who had expressed reluctance to participate in a Maoist function. The People's Front Nepal, a member of the seven-party alliance, stated that many of the victims were its party cadres. Following the Maoist action, over 150 locals complied with the Maoist order to participate in the function, fearing retribution if they did not do so.

Comment

18. (C) The Parties have worked to square the circle resulting from their March 19 restatement of their 12-point understanding with the Maoists. To appease the Maoists, who had planned an indefinite nationwide strike to begin April 3, the political parties agreed to an April 6-9 nationwide

strike. This strike makes it logistically impossible for the Parties to pursue their original plan of a mass demonstration in Kathmandu on April 8 -- a protest the government had vowed to prevent using every means at its disposal. Instead, party workers will gather peacefully in smaller numbers wherever they can across the country, while the Parties presumably plan for a large-scale demonstration in Kathmandu later on.

MORIARTY